

The California Reality on Reading Test Scores
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The claim that California children's reading scores in elementary schools have "stalled" is not consistent with California data. Improvement from 2001-4 in CST ELA is just about the same as improvement from '99-02 on the Stanford 9 Reading. (The Stanford 9 results use a rough proficiency equivalent of 60th national percentile, a standard somewhere between basic and proficient in the CST standards).

The improvement from 2001-2004 on the CST ELA of .048 in proportion at least Basic matches exactly the improvement from 1999-2002 in proportion of students at least 60th national percentile on the Stanford 9. The improvement in proportion proficient on the CST ELA of .057 exceeds the four-year Stanford 9 improvement.

For the subset of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students (SD), improvement on the ELA exceeds the prior Stanford 9 improvement. Moreover, for proportion at least Basic the 2001-2004 improvement for disadvantaged students is much greater than for non-disadvantaged students. (Numerically, in terms of gap-closing, difference of .341 in 2001 reduces to .257 in 2004, about one-quarter of the way towards closing).

Taking shorter periods on either side of NCLB chronology, compare the period 2002-2004 with 2000-2002. Improvement in proportion at least Proficient in the post-NCLB period is .033 for all students grades 2-5 and this exceeds the .02 improvement from the Stanford 9 in the pre-NCLB period. SD students improved .047 in proportion at least Proficient and .04 in proportion at least Basic in the 2002-2004 period. Improvement on the Stanford 9 2000-2002 was .038.

Data summary displays are shown below. All summaries are for the student scores in grades 2-5. Pooling over grades 2-5 gives the elementary student emphasis of the current debate and smooths out year-to-year features in the scores that often distract presentations. Computations were carried out using the full STAR dataset for the Stanford 9 and California state reports for the CST ELA. For the CST ELA, results for Proportion at least Basic are shown along with the usual Proportion at least Proficient.

Real California Test Results

California CST ELA results 2001-2004

STAR students grades 2-5

	Proportion at least Basic				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	Improvement
All Students	0.63	0.668	0.692	0.678	.048
SD Students	0.48	0.525	0.58	0.565	.085

	Proportion at least Proficient				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	Improvement
All Students	0.308	0.332	0.36	0.365	.057
SD Students	0.15	0.173	0.218	0.22	.07

Rough proficiency equivalent
proportion at or above 60th percentile on Stanford 9 reading

STAR students Grades 2-5

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Improvement	
						'99-02	'98-02
All Students	0.296	0.316	0.344	0.355	0.364	0.048	0.068
SD Students	0.117	0.149	0.177	0.192	0.21	0.061	0.093
SD Students in HighSD Schools	0.094	0.123	0.15	0.168	0.188	0.065	0.094

Note: A similar analysis for Los Angeles Unified (LAUSD)
The Reality for Reading Test Scores: Los Angeles Unified
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<http://www-stat.stanford.edu/~rag/nclb/lausdreality.pdf>

Other References

Materials for "Children's Reading Scores Stalled in Many States" at
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps1/EPRU/articles/EPRU-0410-75-OWI-data.pdf>
<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps1/EPRU/articles/EPRU-0410-75-OWI-press.pdf>
